

# MCRC NOTICIAS



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July 2012

## INVEST IN SERVICE TO OTHERS THROUGH **ERIE GIVES**

*JOEL TUZYNSKI, MCRC EXEC. DIRECTOR*



*Joel Tuzynski*

We are pleased to participate once again in the "Erie Gives" fundraising event sponsored by the Erie Community Foundation. On this day, people are provided the opportunity, and an electronic pathway, to show support for their favorite charity by making an on-line cash donation to one, or several, of their

favorite nonprofit organizations. It is a day to make a difference in the bottom line of Erie's nonprofit sector by giving on-line, in real time, with just several clicks of a mouse or keyboard.

Who among us in Erie does not have a branch somewhere on their family tree that has its roots in another land...who does not celebrate some type of ethnic Holiday or family tradition... and who does not proudly honor the memory of a great grandparent on the anniversary of their passing? Starting over in a new land is always a struggle, yet always an adventure. From Bread Lines, to Food Pantries, and from cardboard shacks, to public housing, our nonprofit

friends have always been there to help anyone who wants to help themselves become self-sufficient. Today's tough economy no longer just threatens families, but threatens our very nonprofit safety net itself.

I appeal to everyone to join with me, our board members, our staff, and our clients, to make a generous pledge to MCRC as a personal investment in our mission of service to the foreign born, "New Americans" living in Erie. Both our future, and yours, relies on the unique talents and gifts of our friends and neighbors. Won't you help us...so we can help you?

### Coming Events

- July 20<sup>th</sup> - Ramadan Starts
  - July 20<sup>th</sup> and August 3<sup>rd</sup> - Hispanic Health Conferences
  - July 29<sup>th</sup> - Tisha B'Av - Jewish Holiday
  - July 26<sup>th</sup> American Disabilities Act was signed
  - August 14<sup>th</sup> - Erie Gives Event
  - August 18<sup>th</sup> - Celebrate Erie
  - MCRC - diversity, culture, and everything in between
- (On the corner of 10<sup>th</sup> and State Street)



To learn more about Erie Gives and how to participate with your donation, link to

<http://www.eriegives.org/about-erie-gives>

For a look at a short MCRC video describing our mission to break down barriers and provide assistance to refugees and others in need, click on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liWhe6lIokU>

## Workplace ESL Builds Employee Confidence and Competence



MCRC's adult ESL program is expanding beyond our building and into the Erie community. As the workforce becomes more diverse, local employers are recognizing the need to provide relevant training to help their employees succeed on the job. Starting in February, the Education Department began collaborating with local businesses to offer English language training to their employees. To date, MCRC has held classes at **Amsafe Bridport** and **UPMC Hamot**.

Both classes met five hours a week for 8 weeks, serving 25 employees. Participants represented the countries of Bosnia, Uzbekistan, Togo, the Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Moldova, Nepal, the Sudan, Russia, and Ethiopia. All of the students had some knowledge of conversational English, but their abilities to read and write varied as much as their countries of origin.

Employees' responses to the classes were overwhelmingly positive. They were appreciative that their employers were willing to invest in helping them to improve their English skills. One woman said, "I come to the United States and I go to work very fast. I don't have time study English. This is good class." According to another student, "Every day one new thing. It helps."

For more information on ESL classes in the workplace, contact Teri Amicucci, Director of Education, at 455-0212, extension 319 or [tamicucci@multiculturalcrc.org](mailto:tamicucci@multiculturalcrc.org).

*Employees studying English language and communication skills at **UPMC Hamot** pictured with Hamot Leadership Development Coordinator Rick Cornwell and MCRC Director of Education, Teri Amicucci (Instructor).*

*Front, L to R: Chhali, Volha, Lidiya*

*Back L to R: Lila, Stan, RicK Cornwell, Teri Amicucci, Agouk, Roseline, Elsa*



## Grad Student Presents Pre-College Writing Sessions



*Martin Senger*

**Martin E. Senger**, a graduate student in (TESOL) Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages at the New School in Greenwich Village, NY, is offering an ESL pre-college writing seminar here at MCRC throughout the month of July.

The learning sessions are targeted to students preparing to go into post-secondary education, who need to improve their academic writing skills. They are being held in the MCRC first floor classroom on Saturdays and Sundays from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The program is free of charge, and will continue through July 29<sup>th</sup>.



## Muslim Ramadan Calls for Spiritual Discipline, Celebrates Fellowship

Spiritual reflection, intensified religious reading, and complete daytime fasting from food, drink, and other physical needs: in other words, **Ramadan** has arrived for Muslims around the world. Each year, during the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar, Muslims practice this approximately month-long observance by fasting during the day for physical wellness and spiritual discipline, reading the entire Qur'an, and attending optional nightly gatherings in mosques to recite the book in thirty sessions. This year, Ramadan begins Saturday, July 20.

While daily fasting from food is expected, special circumstances temporarily allow some to forego the fast. As a general rule, children are not required to fast until they reach puberty, although they are spiritedly encouraged to practice for later life. Also, pregnant women, the elderly and infirm, and those who are traveling great distances are exempt. However, as an alternative, they must either aid the poor or complete the fast at a later date so as not to fall behind.

Ramadan is not solely a time for observing religious disciplines, however. Many cultural activities and recreations are included. In Egypt, the streets are decorated with lanterns as Muslims there continue the 800 year old tradition. Elsewhere, lights adorn cities and add a welcoming atmosphere to visitors and citizens alike. For Muslims in Western society, families commonly beautify their homes' interior to make children feel more directly included in the celebration.

In many ways, Ramadan is also a season of great joy for Muslims. The fast is broken at sunset, traditionally by eating dates, following the custom of Mohammed. Then favorite foods are served at dinner, and friends may gather from time to time in the evening for fellowship and to share gifts. So, to learn and practice some Arabic, here is a Ramadan blessing to pass on to others: *Kullu am wa antum bi-khair*, "May you be well throughout the year."

## Volunteer Spotlight



Penn State/ Behrend graduate **Sarah Steen** and 3rd-year student **Aaron Morelli** have been putting their education and varied talents to plentiful use this summer as volunteers assisting MCRC's marketing and education departments. The results of their work are exceptional and beneficial to MCRC and our clients. They have worked on team and individual projects that include creating and producing program brochures and other marketing tools, MCRC's annual report, a data base of donor information, and promotional materials that feature MCRC's soon-to-open Cultural Enrichment Center. For a look at the great quality of their collaborative efforts, see their video creation about the mission and services MCRC provides. It appears on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liWhe6l1OKU>.

**Sarah** graduated with a B.S. in Marketing at PSB and is a founding member of the college's Gamma Sigma Sigma community service sorority. In

addition to the work she has contributed to our marketing efforts, she has been assisting our Refugee Support Services department with a work assignment in client employment counseling.

**Aaron** is an International Business and Marketing major at PSBehrend, and during the academic year, in addition to his studies, he works as a language tutor at the college's Learning and Resource Center. Aaron is bilingual in Spanish and French. His plans following graduation include travel and service in the Peace Corps. When he isn't working on marketing projects, he regularly assists ESL instructor Cathie Whitmire with classroom activities and client interaction and works as a tutor to help clients prepare for the driving permit examination.

MCRC is grateful for the service of these talented volunteers and proud of their valued contributions.

**MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER**

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Benefiting the Multicultural Community Resource Center

**1st Annual MCRC Hitting the Cultural Links Golf Tournament**

**Thursday, September 6, 2012**  
Lake Shore Country Club  
5950 Lake Shore Drive, Erie

Registration: 12:00 Noon - Sharp! • 1:00 Shotgun Start • 18-Hole Play

For Registration or Info Contact:  
Joanna Cherpak  
MCRC • 554 East 10th Street • Erie, PA 16503  
**814.455.0212**

\$100 Non-Members Includes: Hot Dog Lunch, Scramble, Greens Fees, Riding Cart, Premium Steak Dinner, Prizes!

Thanks for your Support!

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**Your Donation is Appreciated**

To make a financial gift to MCRC, send it to Joanna Cherpak, Director of Human Resources & Fund Development, 554 East 10th St., Erie, PA 16503 or donate online at [www.multiculturalcrc.org](http://www.multiculturalcrc.org).

MCRC is a 501 (c)(3) charity and all donations are tax deductible.

*MCRC volunteer opportunities exist for one-time or continuing activities.*

*Please visit the Volunteer tab at our Website at [www.multiculturalcrc.org](http://www.multiculturalcrc.org).*

*To inquire, send an email to [MCRC@multiculturalcrc.org](mailto:MCRC@multiculturalcrc.org). Be sure to include your name and phone number in your message.*



**A great day to help MCRC**

Erie Gives is on Tuesday, Aug. 14 from 8 am to 8 pm.



The Erie Community Foundation will match a percentage of each donation made to MCRC through the Erie Gives event. On Aug. 14, the Foundation will share \$76,000 among participating nonprofits, with an additional \$25,000 from GE Transportation.

Proudly serving the needs of the Hispanic and refugee communities since 1975.